

Tahiti: Isle of Dreams

in the grave dim silent aisles one
knows some-
times the light breath of the spirit
haunting the
place in which it came to birth, in
which it is now
a stranger, from which it must shortly
wholly
fade.

In some such way I am aware of the
spirit of
Tahiti.

Or again. I have a friend whose
story, simple
as it is, will serve. He was once wealthy
by in-
heritance and a painter for pleasure. A
few years
ago he was ruined quite completely. He
faced his
poverty with a brave heart and left
Europe for
he knew not what new land in which to
labour for
his living. The tramp steamer on which
he was
given a passage touched Canada, the
States, Aus-
tralia, but he stayed in none. In time
he made
Tahiti. A native of whom I have spoken
in this
book offered him for nothing a simple
hut on a
point by the sea among the coconuts in
which to
rest and paint and learn Tahiti. After
some

months he was able to acquire a
tangled tropic
valley in a remote district, and he
moved there
unhesitatingly. He lives now in a small
bamboo
and pandanus house; he has planted,
and is plant-